

COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT
FOR THE DELINEATION OF RESPONSIBILITIES
FOR INDIVIDUALS WITH DISABILITIES

BETWEEN THE
DEPARTMENT OF HUMAN SERVICES

AND THE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

AGREEMENT

This agreement is entered into this first day of July, in the year 2005, by and between the Rhode Island Department of Education (RIDE) and the Rhode Island Department of Human Services (DHS) for the purpose of delineating roles and responsibilities of RIDE and the DHS/Office of Rehabilitation Services in the implementation of a collaborative program which coordinates and provides vocational rehabilitation services leading to employment outcomes for youth with disabilities who are in transition from school to adult life.

This agreement is for a five-year period commencing with the first annual period July 1, 2005 and ending on June 30, 2010. Each annual period is contingent upon the availability of sufficient State and Federal appropriations, as well as satisfactory annual reviews of effectiveness and compliance with the requirements of the written agreement (see PAR. 4)

WITNESSETH:

Whereas, the Department of Human Services (DHS) through the Federal/State Vocational Rehabilitation program provides services to eligible individuals with disabilities who meet criteria for services provision under the Order of Selection Policy.

Whereas, the Department of Education through its State annual appropriation will provide up to \$200,000.00 to the Department of Human Services/Office of Rehabilitation Services (ORS) in order to match Federal allotment to ORS under the Federal Rehabilitation Act, as Amended. The Department of Human Services may adjust the State match related to the availability of Federal funds.

Whereas, in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), P.L. 108-446, the RI Department of Education (RIDE) and Local Education Agencies (LEA's) provide services to students with disabilities now, therefore, the parties agree as follows:

PAR. 1: PERFORMANCE

RIDE and DHS agree to perform all obligations and duties as contained in Addendum I - *Program*, hereby incorporated by reference into this agreement.

PAR. 2: STAFF

- A) Two staff are designated in the Department of Human Services to work on the cooperative program. The staff are under the administration and direct supervision of the Office of Rehabilitation Services. The responsibilities of the staff assigned to the collaborative program are described in Addendum I - *Program*. All staff will implement new patterns of services related to providing rehabilitation services to eligible youth with disabilities that are in transition from school to employment. In addition to providing vocational rehabilitation services to youth with disabilities, staff will engage in liaison relationships with the regional Transition Centers and the

Regional Vocational Assessment Centers (RVACs) and participate in the statewide and regional Transition Advisory Councils.

PAR. 3: FINANCIAL

- A) The RIDE will establish an account within the RIDE to cover all expenses incurred with this agreement and described in Addendum I. The costs of administrative activity associated with this project are not costs which are attributable to the State or locality in carrying out the administrative functions of the State or local government. The total budget shall not exceed **\$938,960.00** for each annual period.
- B) Documentation and Condition of Payment: DHS/ORS agrees to maintain fiscal records related to the provision of the cooperative program described in Addendum I. DHS/ORS agrees to provide the RIDE with monthly fiscal reports and any other related reports as required.
- C) The Office of Rehabilitation Services will have direct control of all expenditures for Vocational Rehabilitation services and administration of these services. The program requirements for the cooperative program reflect new patterns of Vocational Rehabilitation services provided by ORS to eligible individuals with disabilities, in concert with related services from RIDE that are provided to individuals with disabilities. The Order of Selection provisions required by ORS are applicable to all individuals served through this agreement.
- D) In the event that State funding or Federal financial participation changes during the term of this agreement, RIDE and DHS agree to make the appropriate modifications to this agreement, including modification/reduction to RIDE's State match to provide the services under this agreement.

E) RIDE will establish accounts: State 1072.27201101 and Federal 1072.27251522 for the purpose of this agreement.

PAR. 4: REVIEW

DHS/ORS and RIDE will review the cooperative program on an annual basis to determine its effectiveness and to assure its compliance with the requirements of this agreement. Where necessary, additional reviews will be conducted, e.g., if program performance is in question.

PAR. 5: CHANGES

Changes, which are mutually agreed upon by both Departments, will be written, signed and made a part of this agreement by numerically consecutive amendment.

PAR. 6: TERMINATION

Either Department may terminate this agreement at any time by giving written notice to the other of such termination and specifying the effective date thereof, at least thirty (30) days before the effective date of such termination. If the agreement is terminated as provided herein, DHS will be paid for the services actually performed through the effective date of such termination. Any balance of unexpended RIDE funds will be returned to RIDE.

PAR. 7: DOCUMENTATION

RIDE will be responsible for insuring that the required fiscal documentation of the time and services is maintained in accordance with federal requirements.

PAR. 8: FEDERAL FUNDING

RIDE will assure that federal funds, which are drawn down and deposited in the RIDE account, will reflect the actual expenditures related to the cooperative program.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties hereto have hereunder set their hands as of the date first above written and the agreement made legally binding as follows:

BY:  DATE: _____
Commissioner, RI Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (RIDE)

BY:  DATE: 9/12/08
Acting Director, RI Department of Human Services (DHS)

ADDENDUM I

OVERALL GOAL AND VISION OF THE COOPERATIVE AGREEMENT

The cooperative program will coordinate an interagency approach to transition services, which promote the following key values and concepts:

- * Students and families are the leaders and drivers of the career and transition planning process and can expect partnership and assistance from education and rehabilitation providers to achieve their goals.

The cooperative program will develop:

- * New models of service delivery that reflect statewide partnerships and are locally accessible.
- * New service practices and patterns which are coordinated, consistent, and flexible to assist students and families to obtain information, gain understanding, and have real opportunities to provide direction as to how their transition services can be improved and implemented.
- * New ways of following students along while in school and following up after graduation or otherwise leaving school in order to evaluate the effectiveness of transition services.
- * Greater outreach and increased sensitivity to the diverse needs of students and families: cultural, linguistic and socio-economic.

WORK PLAN

OBJECTIVE 1: To coordinate staff and resources in new ways to improve transition services for students with disabilities

- A. The cooperative program will be staffed by the ORS Assistant Administrator/Transition Coordinator, and one Senior Rehabilitation Counselor, to work specifically on developing and implementing new patterns of services related to transition.
- B. Direct field service staff will provide and/or coordinate vocational rehabilitation services, which are reflected in Individualized Plans for Employment (IPE's). Services may include, but are not limited to, one or more of the following, in addition to vocational rehabilitation counseling and guidance: vocational evaluation including situational assessments, skill training and other vocational development, job development and job placement, supported employment services, and rehabilitation technology. All services must be related to preparing for, obtaining, or maintaining employment. Services are purchased (under contract) from the Regional Vocational Assessment Centers within the Regional Transition Centers or community rehabilitation programs and providers who are approved to provide the service through fees established in the ORS Fee Schedule. All services provided will reflect the informed choice of the ORS customer.
- C. LEA's where the student with a disability resides will provide special education and related services. The IEP and IPE will specify the services required for effective transition and the agencies or individuals responsible for their provision. Natural support planning will be included in the transition planning process.

- D. The ORS Assistant Administrator/Transition Coordinator will work with staff from RIDE to steer the implementation of new patterns of transition services through the cooperative agreement and the ORS transition effort (coordinating meetings and cross disciplinary training, development of new patterns of service, coordination with other cooperative agreements with other state agencies). Training programs will include information and technical assistance related to policy and procedures of adult service systems.
- E. Staff assigned to the program will coordinate the development of informational material with significant input from the Regional Transition Advisory Committees, which will expand students' and families' awareness and choice of services and resources available in the transition process. Materials will be made available in alternative formats and in the communication mode that is understandable to students and families.

OBJECTIVE 2: To coordinate cross-disciplinary training approaches and capacity building initiatives among key constituencies to promote the key values throughout all practices.

- A. RIDE and ORS will coordinate and share the allocation of resources in the development and implementation of training programs that will improve or enhance transition services.
- B. RIDE and ORS will coordinate with statewide training activities related to:
- Transition Assessment
 - Transition Planning
 - IEP Development
 - Coordination of Post-Secondary Employment and Training, and
 - IEP and IPE integration.

- C. RIDE and ORS will examine and promote opportunities to pool agency resources to assist in meeting students' transition needs including the identification and utilization of natural supports and other third party agencies.

OBJECTIVE 3: To organize the capacity for expanded services and new patterns of providing services related to the needs of Local Education Authorities (LEA's).

- A. Each of the regional Transition Centers and regional Transition Advisory Councils will plan with ORS staff a specific new pattern of service related to a regional need to be addressed through the cooperative program within budgetary limitations.
- B. Work plans will describe the students who will use and benefit from the proposed programs; how new linkages with ORS will occur; the specific new approaches to providing career planning in the transition process; timelines; and responsibilities of staff. Each program will include an evaluation component which will include measurable outcomes.
- C. Implementation of new initiatives will be contingent upon availability of funds. The ORS Assistant Administrator/Transition Coordinator will have the lead responsibility of negotiating any contracts, according to the DHS contract process, related to the Cooperative Program, and monitoring contractual agreements related to completion of objectives.

OBJECTIVE 4: To develop state and local linkages to assure that students with disabilities are fully included in all statewide career development, training and employment initiatives.

A. RIDE and ORS staff will develop practices, strategies and connections with initiatives that may assist in students meeting their transition goals for training and employment such as:

- Career & Technical Education
- Perkins Grant funded activities (Industry Field Service Coordinators and the School Based Coordinators)
- School Counselors (Guidance)
- Adult Education
- Workforce Investment Act Initiatives (Youth Services)
- One-Stop Career Centers
- Employer Services Network

B. RIDE and ORS will leverage the resources of this agreement to assist local connections of the Regional Vocational Assessment Centers with various initiatives.

OBJECTIVE 5: To jointly develop a useful evaluation system which addresses how students are making meaningful career transition plans while in school and how successful they are in employment one year post graduation.

A. RIDE and ORS will steer the design of the overall evaluation component of the cooperative program to include:

- Consultation and collaboration with existing evaluation resources.
- A method to assess whether parents and students are present and significantly involved in guiding their transition plans through the IEP process.

- A mechanism whereby LEA's are able to follow along with students who are in transition and follow up with students who have exited school. This includes the examination and analysis of current student information systems related to successful transition of students.
 - A method to assess satisfaction of students, parents, regional TAC's, teachers, and ORS counselors in the results of the cooperative program.
 - A method to analyze data collected to relate to the improvement of student's transition from school to career and adult life.
- B. A tracking system will be coordinated with the RIDE MIS effort for following along and following up students in the LEA's. Satisfaction surveys will be in place for students and families who are working with ORS in transition planning.

RESULTS EXPECTED:

- Cross-disciplinary (parent-student/professional) training and vision sharing opportunities have been instituted for school and ORS personnel which meaningfully involve families and other stakeholders in transition (MHRH, providers, employers etc.).
- ORS transition counselors are meeting on a regular basis to share ideas, approaches, and strategies.
- ORS staff are meaningfully and visibly connected to the High Schools.
- ORS staff are meaningfully and visibly connected the One-Stop Career Centers.
- Informational material has been developed collaboratively related to options for student choice and is available in alternative formats and in the communication mode of students and families.

- There are consistent (statewide) user-friendly referral processes and forms used by educational and ORS staff.
- Program reports (vocational assessments, monitoring reports) are standardized throughout the Statewide system.
- IEP's reflect increased representation and participation of parents, students and ORS counselors.
- The goals and activities in the Individual Education Plans are specifically related to the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) for students in transition.
- IEP's show evidence of flexibility and meaning related to career planning for students with disabilities demonstrated by vocational objectives and related outcomes achieved.
- There is a statewide infrastructure in place which promotes clear seamless connections to adult services including supported employment programs and services demonstrated by interagency tracking and follow up systems for students requiring adult services.
- There is an evaluation mechanism, which can assess:
 - Overall satisfaction
 - Opportunities for participation and communication
 - Opportunities for influence and change (parents and students)
 - What has happened to students 1-year post graduation.
- Connecting activities are on-going.
- There will be a formal mechanism to review the programs and services regularly to determine if innovations, improvements or expansion need to be implemented. Staff of both the RIDE and ORS will be partners in this review. Best practices will be identified and plans to duplicate these practices in school districts will be investigated.